

## EXTENSIONS OF REMARKS

HAPPY 90TH BIRTHDAY,  
GOVERNOR ELMER ANDERSON

**HON. BRUCE F. VENTO**

OF MINNESOTA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, June 23, 1999*

Mr. VENTO. Mr. Speaker, today Governor Elmer L. Anderson is 90 years of age. My sincere best wishes and congratulations. While serving in public office, Elmer Anderson has had a profound impact shaping discourse as well as public, social and environmental policy in our state of Minnesota.

Elmer Anderson is a businessman, public official and citizen—a Minnesota 20th century renaissance man. Happy Birthday, Governor Anderson.

Mr. Speaker, I submit this June 17, 1999 St. Paul Pioneer Press article by Steve Dornfeld for the RECORD.

[From the Pioneer Press, June 17, 1999]

A MINNESOTA TREASURE

(Steven Dornfeld)

Former Gov. Elmer L. Anderson has had more careers than most of folks could manage in several lifetimes—politician, corporate CEO, newspaper publisher, farmer, philanthropist and civic leader. And he's been enormously successful at all of them.

But Anderson, who turns 90 today, will be remembered most for his high ideals his innovative mind and his selfless dedication to the public good throughout a life that spanned most of the 20th century. He is a genuine Minnesota treasure.

"It would be pretty hard to quarrel with the notion that Elmer Anderson is Minnesota's greatest living citizen," says Tom Swain, a long-time friend who headed Anderson's gubernatorial staff.

The people who know Anderson best tend to speak of him in superlatives.

"He's about the wisest, the most principled, the most visionary person I have ever met," says former U.S. Sen. Dave Durenberger, who handled community affairs for H.B. Fuller Co. when Anderson was CEO of the St. Paul adhesives manufacturing firm.

Russell Fridley, a leading Minnesota historian and former director of the Minnesota Historical Society, says Anderson "exemplifies the best of the citizen politician."

The former governor is more restrained in assessing his accomplishments. Several days ago, as he reflected on his long life, Anderson said, "I cannot help but have a great sense of appreciation and gratitude. I have been very lucky to have survived for so long and to have done well in a number of different areas.

"Everyone seems so kind and so indulgent as you grow old—and of course, all of your enemies die off," he added with a chuckle.

Anderson held public office for just 12 years—10 as a state senator and two as governor. He served in the Senate in the 1950s when it was dominated by rural conservatives who say a very limited role for state government.

Then, as now, Anderson prided himself on being a "liberal Republican." Anderson achieved the chairmanship of the Senate Public Welfare Committee, and championed mental health and child welfare programs.

Fridley recalls one legislative session in which the DFL-oriented Liberal Caucus captured control of the House, while the Republican-oriented Conservatives held the Senate. When the major appropriations bills emerged from committee, Fridley says, a leading House Liberal complained, "You know what Elmer Anderson did? He put \$10 million more into welfare than we did."

In 1960, Anderson won election as governor, defeating DFL incumbent Orville Freeman. But the term of governor was just two years at that time and his stint as Minnesota's chief executive was short-lived.

DFLers accused Anderson of rushing the completion of Interstate 35 so he could reap the political benefits. They charged that the rush job resulted in shoddy construction that would cost the state millions to repair. The charges ultimately proved to be false, but Anderson lost to DFL Lt. Gov. Karl Rolvaag by a scant 91 votes.

The close election triggered a protracted recount in which thousands of disputed ballots were examined, one by one. But the result did not change.

Many Anderson stalwarts wanted him "to appeal it all the way" to the Supreme Court, Swane recalls. But he says Anderson did not want to appear to be usurping the office and throw the state into political turmoil, so he "gulped hard" and accepted the outcome.

"In my early years, when I was a young politician, I used to think what a waste it was that Elmer could only serve two years as governor—that the state was deprived of all that talent," Durenberger says.

But Durenberger says he has come to see Anderson's defeat as Minnesota's "good fortune"—because it freed Anderson from the constraints of partisan politics and enabled the ex-governor to be the principal statesman and civic leader he has been for the last four decades.

After leaving public office, Anderson returned to H.B. Fuller and helped build it into a Fortune 500 company—one known for an employee- and customer-centered philosophy that would be ridiculed on Wall Street today.

"I always had a philosophy at Fuller that making a profit was not our No. 1 priority," Anderson says. He believed that if a business paid attention to its customers and generously rewarded employees who did their best, profits would follow.

But Anderson did not disappear from the political scene. He took the lead in pushing two major initiatives from his term as governor—the enactment of the so-called Tacornite Amendment to help revitalize Minnesota's Iron Range, and the creation of Voyageurs National Park.

In later years, Anderson distinguished himself as chairman of the University of Minnesota Board or Regents, president of the Minnesota Historical Society, a leader in efforts to protect Minnesota's natural resources, a lover of books and a promoter of reading.

In 1976, after retiring from H.B. Fuller, Anderson fulfilled a life-long dream when he ac-

quired two weekly newspapers in Princeton, merged them and began building a publishing enterprise. Today it has 25 community newspapers and 7 shoppers with \$30 million in annual sales and 475 employees.

Until recently, when he began working on his autobiography, Anderson produced two signed editorials a week for his newspapers that frequently were quoted by pundits and policymakers throughout the state.

While Anderson's eyes and limbs are failing him, his mind is as nimble as ever—and he still is involved in projects like preserving endangered areas along the North Shore of Lake Superior. "I've always had projects and when I get involved in projects, I like to see them through," Anderson says.

Not long ago, Tom Swain arranged a get-acquainted luncheon between Anderson and new University of Minnesota President Mark Yudof. Swain, who was serving as a university vice president at the time, through the ex-governor and regents' chairman was someone Yudof should meet.

Swain figured the luncheon would be strictly a social occasion "But when we sat down, by golly, Elmer has his own agenda. He had four for five things he wanted Yudof to be aware of. His mind just never quits."

If Elmer Anderson has one shortcoming, it is this: the man simply does not know how to retire.

IN HONOR OF THE BANGLADESH  
CULTURAL ALLIANCE OF THE  
MIDWEST

**HON. DENNIS J. KUCINICH**

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Wednesday, June 23, 1999*

Mr. KUCINICH. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the Bangladesh Cultural Alliance of the Midwest on the occasion of the Tenth Annual Convention.

The BCAM was established in 1990 to unite the ethnic resident Bangladeshis of the Midwest region for preservation and promotion of Bangladeshi culture, and to promote friendship and greater understanding between the peoples of Bangladesh and America. So far seven states have taken pride in promoting this ideal. Every year BCAM organizes a cultural program that includes Bangladeshi dances, dramas and songs by participants from each state.

Bangladeshi cuisine, a fashion show, and special performances by prominent performing artists from Bangladesh are the highlights of the program. In addition, discussions on issues related to the role of ethnic Bangladeshis in the community are carried out in a friendly environment.

Promoting cultural diversity and tolerance of other cultures, BCAM is a wonderful example of how to protect cultural diversity while at the same time promoting harmony. I salute the Tenth Annual Convention of Bangladesh Cultural Alliance of the Midwest and commend its

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